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The object of the book is well stated in the author's closing words:—

"I have attempted to make clear the difference between the method of history and that of natural science, and to justify the claim that some knowledge of historical method should form a part of the training of every educated man or woman, while a considerable acquaintance with the method should be required of every teacher of history. I have sought to demonstrate the necessity of developing the historical consciousness by the teaching of history in the schools, and of supplying a sound base for such instruction through scientific historical study. Finally, I have hoped to awaken in a few the laudable ambition to contribute something to the exact knowledge of man's past life in society through acquaintance with the methods of historical research and their conscious and careful application. If the book accomplishes one or more of these things, it will serve a good purpose."

CHARLES L. WELLS.

JOHN BURROUGHS—BOY AND MAN. By Clara Barrus. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company. 1920.

Few American writers have been more unfortunate in their critics than the late John Burroughs. Year after year American newspapers and their readers have patiently borne a monotonous succession of silly accounts of more or less silly pilgrimages to the succession of rustic dwellings of "Our John", as even Colonel Roosevelt called him. All of these accounts—and virtually everything else printed about Burroughs—were laudatory, oftenest worshipfully laudatory, and more and more, as John Burroughs advanced in years and turned from his early poetic delight in nature to philosophic speculation of the non-technical sort, those who wrote about him regarded him as a modern sage, a wise man of the ages actually living in our own time, and in materialistic America—our own wise John. The climax of this adulation was reached by Dr. Clara Barrus, a close friend, in a book published a year or two ago entitled *Our Friend John Burroughs*, a preposterously shapeless book in which the plainest matters of fact in the Burroughs household became fraught with the

deepest philosophic import, and in which the constant endeavor to be light and jocose only emphasized the author's total lack of the saving grace of humor. And now the material of that book has been re-presented in a volume primarily intended for boys but naïvely said to be equally adapted to adults. It would perhaps be unkind but true to say that it *is* adapted to the boy reader, while the earlier book is adapted to adults who have never had the good fortune to grow up. Happily the new book, like the old, is concerned chiefly, not with the pseudo-sage, but with the boy and young man John Burroughs. "Some persons always skip the parts of a biography that tell about the ancestors, but since boys like to hear about bears, why not a little about forebears?" And so we get a little about Burroughs's very interesting forebears, from whom he plainly derived much of his strength and his weakness, and then a great deal (nearly a dozen chapters) about his early life on the Catskill farm, and his inadequate schooling, and his "working for Uncle Sam" in Washington where Walt Whitman started him on his career as an interpreter of life; and a few more chapters on the mature John Burroughs "at work and play" (the two not clearly differentiated). In all this there is much to inspire the young reader, though a certain softness of moral fibre, which Burroughs himself complacently recognized, made him an insufficient model for young America—more seriously insufficient than the heroic John Muir.

John Burroughs's story, like John Muir's, remains to be told by a well-equipped biographer, a biographer prepared to estimate the several sides of this popular essayist—scientific, literary, and philosophic. If such a critical biographer can be found, it is safe to predict that he will make short work of the somewhat flaccid philosophic musings of the later John Burroughs, give slight praise to his scientific achievement, and value highest his early essays, written in the Washington days, in which Burroughs contented himself with continuing worthily the tradition of sympathetic description of nature established in American letters by Henry Thoreau.

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